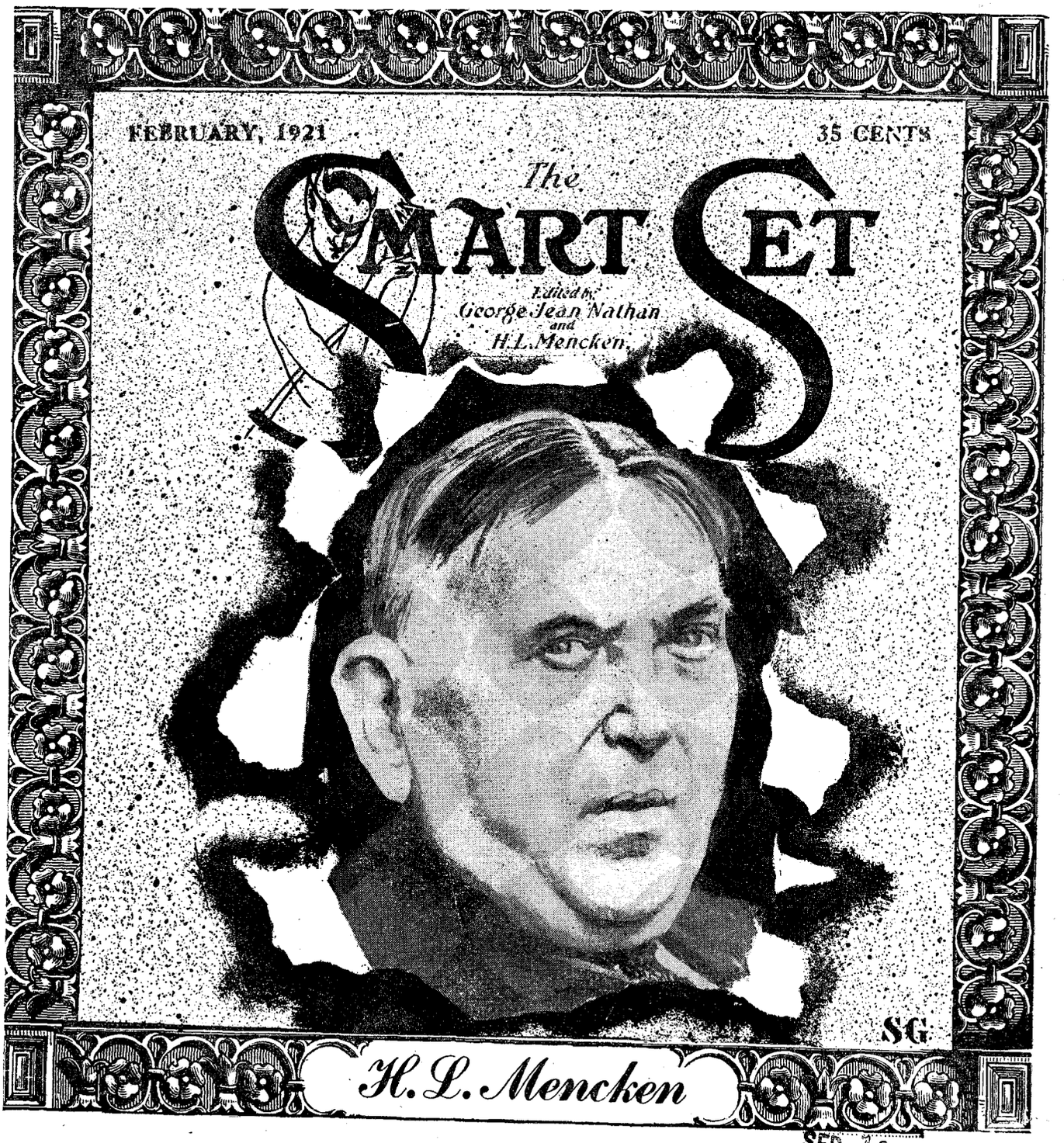
CHINA IN THE UNITED NATIONS? — BY EDGAR SNOW

THE Nation

SEPTEMBER 12, 1953 20¢

Birthday Bouquets for H. L. Mencken by James Branch Cabell, William Manchester, H. L. Davis, Ruth Suckow, and Others



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Letters

Letter from a Banker To John T. Flynn

[*It is not often that a banker-merchant takes up the cudgels against the spokesmen of big business. Indeed, occurrences of this sort are so infrequent that we decided to preserve this one for the record. E. G. Shinner, who recently retired as chairman of the board of Chicago's South Shore National Bank, addressed this open letter via* The Nation *to John T. Flynn, whose eloquent radio voice in behalf of reaction is heard in most of the large cities of the country. Mr. Shinner recently made it possible for the employees of E. G. Shinner and Company, a wholesale meat store with thirty-five outlets in three Middle Western states, to purchase the profitable business with their accumulated pension funds.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

Dear Mr. Flynn: I have just finished reading your broadcast, Series Z-159, which was sent me by a friend. He asked for my comment, and I am taking the liberty of putting it in the form of an open letter to you. For your remarks are widely circulated and deserve more than a private reply.

On several important points, I am sorry to say, you are either poorly informed or careless with your facts. You state, for example, that in 1938 unemployment was as high as it was when Roosevelt took office. This is an error to the extent of, roughly, four million.

You imply that the Roosevelt policies during the first six-year period did not improve the national economy. This, again is a misrepresentation. The national income for this period rose from thirty-nine billion dollars to seventy-two billion—no mean accomplishment in view of the utterly demoralized state of the country when F. D. R. took over. You go on to compare the cost of government in 1920 with the present cost and express great worry. Any comparison between these two periods without a detailed breakdown to show where, how, and why the increase came about is misleading and of no value. You might with equal logic get excited about the difference in the cost between the Mayflower and the Queen Mary.

You also imply that government financing should follow a pattern similar to that of the prudent financing of the affairs of an individual. Let us unwrap and explore this much used, abused, and fallacious line of reasoning. The life of a normal individual is divided into four distinct phases—a period of complete helplessness; a period of education, during which time he is usually dependent on others; a period of productivity which starts with modest earnings, rises to a peak during middle life, and then tapers off or ends abruptly; and finally a period of decline or senility—quite a different pattern from that of national development.

You are gravely concerned about the government debt, regarding it as a millstone around our necks. I have been saying for several years that the debt is not a millstone; it is, rather, a stabilizing factor in our economy. It is the flywheel on the generator, or any machine that depends for its efficiency upon constant and sustained speed. It stabilizes our interest rates; it provides a medium of sound investment for thousands of banks, fiduciary companies, and business men—both large and small.

About 40 per cent of the investment portfolios of all the banks in the country are in government bonds. No adequate substitute for these investments is at present available. The money to pay the interest on these bonds, of course, comes from general taxes, largely income taxes, and while the income-tax set-up may be far from perfect, it is still basically right; it taxes most heavily those who are best able to pay—a leveling process which has a salutary effect on our national economy.

I am not greatly worried about taxes for the reason that Uncle Sam shows no inclination to hoard money. The taxes gathered are immediately poured back into the economic mill stream and serve to make employment and prosperity for our people. My fondest hope is that we may maintain a degree of national prosperity that will permit us to bear an annual tax burden of sixty to seventy billion dollars indefinitely. If we can do that, the neon lights will continue to burn and the cash registers will continue to click in every town and village throughout this nation.

You also imply that during the last twenty years we have had nothing but trouble—economic trouble. My observation is that we are now, and have been for most of the past twenty years, enjoying greater national prosperity than has ever been experienced by any major nation.

Unfortunately, most of our commentators, editors, public officials, and economic foundations no longer make any attempt to examine the cause and effect of the violent changes that are taking place all over the world—changes in which we are playing a major role. In fact, they attack those who do try to apply common sense to such questions. This phobia for all ideas or expression of a liberal nature has been carried to a point where a free and open discussion of the world's greatest problem—communism—is no longer possible.

In a recent journey through the Middle East, after talking to many people I came to the conclusion that the philosophy which you expound is having the effect of driving under the Russian umbrella every person and every nation with the slightest communistic leanings thereby solidifying the opposition to us in the cold war. In other words, we lack a realistic approach to a world one-half of which is now communistically inclined or actually Communist.

While in Cairo I had an opportunity to become acquainted with and discuss the regime of Naguib. One of my newfound acquaintances owned a large tract of land in the Nile Valley. Naguib, it seems, is carrying out a program of expropriating these large holdings and selling the land in small tracts on deferred payments to the peasants (former share-croppers). He is paying the landlords on the basis of the real-estate tax which they have been paying over a period of years. Since most of these large landowners were close to the Farouk government, the tax per acre which they had been paying was much less than that paid by the small farmer; hence they have fared rather badly. Yet the fairness of the method was readily acknowledged by some of those most adversely affected, including my friend.

I note with interest that a similar program is being pursued in Guatemala; in this instance, by a leftist or at least a very liberal government. This must be extreme anathema to you and your followers, but to my thinking it is a much safer and more practical way of stopping the spread of Communist influence than the attempt to maintain the status quo throughout the world.

However much most of us hate communism, it is time we recognized the obvious—that communism cannot be destroyed by force alone.

Chicago, Ill. E. G. SHINNER

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THE Nation
EVERY WEEK SINCE 1865

EDITORIALS

The Shape of Things

Passing The Tariff Buck

It is no criticism of Mr. Lewis Douglas to say that his report to the President recommending lower tariffs and more American private investment abroad contains nothing very new. For at least thirty years the vast majority of economists have been arguing that the United States, as a creditor nation, must drop its traditional protectionism and make it possible for debtor nations to meet their obligations by selling goods to this country.

Similar advice has been given in recent years by groups headed by Gordon Gray and Daniel W. Bell but their reports are mouldering in the files while the tariffists go marching on. The President, with his party split in twain on the tariff issue, did not even wait to hear from Mr. Douglas before passing the buck to yet another commission headed by C. B. Randall, chairman of the Inland Steel Co.

The composition of this group suggests that at least a majority of its members will also report in favor of lower tariffs. But however loudly they may blow the free trade trumpets, the tariff walls will not come tumbling down unless President Eisenhower realizes that the time for investigations has passed and grasps the opportunity to give the country a sustained vigorous lead.

Whose U. N. Is It?

Last Tuesday the U. N.'s Administrative Tribunal declared illegal the dismissal of eleven American members of the secretariat who had refused to answer questions before a Congressional subcommittee. The tribunal ordered four of the eleven reinstated; the other seven, who did not want their jobs back, were awarded indemnities totaling $135,000. The verdict simply affirmed a principle that must be apparent to the most casual reader of the U. N. Charter and Staff Regulations: that is, that membership in any political party or the pleading of the Fifth Amendment before a Congressional committee does not in itself justify the dismissal of an international civil servant.

The sobriety of the tribunal's decision was in marked contrast with the furor it created. In Washington, Senator McCarthy insisted "those Commies can't go back" and said he would not stand for the payment of indemnities either. In that citadel of American liberties, the American Legion, then in convention at St. Louis, patriots tumbled over each other on the floor getting anti-U. N. resolutions passed. And in the U. N. itself James Wadsworth of the United States delegation whisked into Mr. Hammerskjold's office and had a long talk, no doubt about the hot weather. The result? Twenty-four hours after the tribunal had announced its decision the Secretary General declared that it would be "inadvisable" to reinstate the vindicated employees and that they would be paid indemnities instead.

The End Is Yet to Come

So the principle is upheld and the principals are sacrificed. Nor is this the end. Senator Jenner says he is going to "reopen" the cases to discover, among other things, what led the tribunal to its verdict! (Will he, we wonder, attempt to subpoena the members—four distinguished jurists from France, Belgium, Sweden, and Turkey?)

There is but one bright aspect to the situation. The U. N. has no money to pay indemnities; so the whole matter must be aired before the next session of the General Assembly. Perhaps the delegates, stung by the need to fork up hard-earned dollars for the purpose, will get angry enough to reclaim their organization from McCarthy and the State Department.

Going Our Way

The formation of the National Issues Committee under the chairmanship of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt "to refute manifestations of fear, confusion, frustration, and despair and to help keep America on the path of progress" is one of several recent indications that American liberals are beginning to understand the true dimensions of "the present danger" which we attempted to define in a series of editorials printed on June 6, 13, and 27. The new committee, non-partisan in composition, hopes to raise a fund of $100,000 for educational work; it does not propose to indorse candidates. The fund it proposes to raise is not large and should be quickly pledged. The makeup of the committee—it includes Oscar Chapman, Leon H. Keyserling, Telford Taylor, Walter P. Reuther, Alan Barth, Robert R. Nathan, Mary McLeod Bethune, and others—gives assurance of its political integrity.

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In This Issue

EDITORIALS

The Shape of Things 201

Stevenson's Opportunity
by Carey McWilliams 202

ARTICLES

China in the U. N.?
A Key to World Peace
by Edgar Snow 204

Vienna Waltz *by J. Alvarez del Vayo* 207

Who'll Give a Dam for Public Power
by Barrow Lyons 208

Bouquets for Mencken
by William Manchester, Harvey Fergusson, Stewart H. Holbrook, H. L. Davis, George Milburn, Gerald W. Johnson, James Branch Cabell, Ruth Suckow, Michael Gold, Thyra Samter Winslow, Idwal Jones 210

BOOKS

Pioneers of the Modern Spirit
by Perry Miller 215

New Books in Brief 216

FILMS *by Manny Farber* 218

MUSIC *by B. H. Haggin* 218

CROSSWORD PUZZLE No. 532
by Frank W. Lewis 220

LETTERS opposite 201

Editorial Board

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Stevenson's Opportunity

BY CAREY McWILLIAMS

ON September 15 Adlai Stevenson will deliver from Chicago the most eagerly anticipated and possibly the most important speech of his career. During his absence much has happened. The Eisenhower Administration has shown its true colors, and the issues of the crucial 1954 Congressional campaign have begun to take form. While he was away, the Democrats in and out of Congress could plausibly contend that they had to mark time until his return; now that he is back they must demonstrate whether they are mice or men. Hence everyone, foe as well as friend, is eager to hear what Mr. Stevenson has to say.

The welcome home accorded Mr. Stevenson by the Dixiecrats and the right-wing Republicans is a measure of the importance of his leadership. The Dixiecrats manifested a lack of enthusiasm that soon passed from unfriendly silence to overt disapproval. Senator Holland of Florida declined an invitation to the Chicago gathering, while Governors Byrnes and Shivers have made it clear that Mr. Stevenson is not their favorite for the 1956 nomination.

The behavior of the right-wing Republicans has been even more significant. In his first press conference in New York on August 21, Mr. Stevenson had some tart comment for the "book-burnings, purges, and invasions of the executive responsibility" that have "obscured the bright image of America" abroad. The release of the Jenner subcommittee's report on "Interlocking Subversion in Government Departments" on August 24—it originally carried a release date of July 30—was clearly intended not only to undercut what Mr. Stevenson might have to say about McCarthyism but to warn him against making an issue of it in 1954. With a unanimity that suggests artful briefing, the right-wing columnists emphasized the fact that the report carries the signatures of the three Democratic members of the subcommittee (McCarran, Eastland, Johnston) and underscored the main conclusion—namely, that the Soviet conspiracy to "penetrate" the federal service has not yet been "fully exposed."

And then Attorney General Herbert Brownell carried the tactic a step farther by announcing that in some respects the internal "Communist menace" is more dangerous today than ever—despite fifteen years of intensive investigation by committees authorized and manned by Dixiecrat and Republican coalitionists, including a year's investigation by three committees staffed and headed by Republicans and aided by a Republican Administration and a greatly expanded Federal Bureau of Investigation. Clearly the intention behind all this is to warn Mr. Stevenson as the nominal head of the Demo-

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cratic Party ("I never felt more titular," he assured European reporters) that "Reds in government" will once again be a major issue in the 1954 campaign. Just to drive the point home, the Republicans will follow Mr. Stevenson's talk with a program of their own originating in Chicago.

Elated by the response to all this ballyhoo, John O'Donnell reported in his column (September 2): "You can be certain that the former standard-bearer of the Fair Deal will make no attacks on McCarthy at his formal Chicago reception—and the same word has gone out to Truman." We have too much respect for Mr. Stevenson's courage to believe that he can be intimidated so easily, but there is an aspect of the war of nerves being waged against him that does concern us.

IS MR. STEVENSON, now that he is home, prepared to discard the role of special assistant to the President on foreign policy? "If Adlai E. Stevenson had been acting as official roving ambassador for President Eisenhower," reports William H. Stoneman of the Chicago *Daily News,* "he could hardly have done better or acted differently than he has on his current world trip." But a policy that Mr. Stevenson may have felt compelled to defend in New Delhi and London he does not have to defend in Chicago—unless, of course, he agrees with it. One cannot say for certain that he disagrees. After reading his speeches and listening to him, R. H. S. Crossman of the London *New Statesman and Nation* concluded that he criticizes Republican foreign policy only when it departs from the straight and narrow path of military containment, adding that Stevenson's "severe philosophy of anti-communism" inevitably breeds the very anti-Communist excesses of which he complains in Senator McCarthy.

But Mr. Stevenson cannot fail to have noticed that American policy is changing, nor can he have returned unmoved by what he heard and saw on his travels. It is understandable that he should have a high regard for the concept of a bipartisan foreign policy; after all, he served under Frank Knox in Roosevelt's win-the-war coalition Cabinet. But it is idle to talk of a "bipartisan" foreign policy when no one can define, with clarity or confidence, just what our policy is. When Walter Lippmann can write that "we are improvising from one predicament to the next," it is absurd to contend that all is well. Clearly the time has arrived for a thoroughgoing debate, not on peripheral issues or tactics, but on the meaning and direction of American policy. But we cannot have such a debate unless Mr. Stevenson chooses to initiate it.

It used to be a truism that a nation's foreign policy reflected, in no small measure, internal tensions and conflicts. We have developed a remarkable unwillingness to acknowledge the connection between our post-war foreign policy and our post-war economic problems, but the connection exists. The reason so many Europeans, and so many Asians too, are upset by McCarthyism is that they regard it, and quite rightly, as one of the keys to our foreign policy. Doubtless they exaggerate the danger of McCarthyism, but who would affirm that they are without justification in fearing the consequences should Senator McCarthy and the right-wing Republicans come to undisputed power in Washington?

On the other hand, those who deplore the influence of McCarthyism abroad can hardly be convincing, either in Europe or America, if they refuse to acknowledge the connection between McCarthyism and a certain tendency in our foreign policy which becomes more pronounced as McCarthy's power increases. Any number of Americans have recently come back from Europe to tell us that American prestige is at an all-time low. Lester Markel, Joseph Harsch, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, and most recently, Mr. Stevenson, with variations in emphasis, have said substantially this. But while deploring McCarthyism, most of our returning travelers have had little to say in basic criticism of American policy. On the contrary, they tend to compound the confusion by taking up the cudgels against McCarthyism on the ground that it is creating a "bad impression" abroad. This type of criticism suggests that there is nothing basically at fault with American policy, that the trouble, if any, lies with Joe McCarthy. Yet the evidence mounts—in France and Italy, in the deterioration of Anglo-American relations, in the increasing isolation of the United States in the United Nations—that our foreign policy might benefit from vigorous criticism and debate.

WHEN HE SPEAKS in Chicago next Tuesday, Mr. Stevenson will have the undivided attention of a very large audience. He will be speaking to the nation and the world. Now is his chance to let the "bright image of America" break through the fogs of fear and ignorance. Let him call for an end to tactics of intimidation that most Americans condemn in "book-burning" but sanction when they are used as weapons by Congressional committees to coerce opinion and stifle debate. Let him demand that the First Amendment be respected by Congressmen as well as by other citizens. Let him call for a repudiation of entangling alliances with discredited dictators. Let him demand an American policy calculated to win friends and influence people—a policy based on the freest cultural exchange with all the peoples of the world. Let him challenge the "go-it-aloners" and the sappers of the United Nations to quit hiding behind dishonest slogans and untruths ("General Marshall lost China to the Reds") and state their real objectives. Above all, let him remember, as R. H. S. Crossman has reminded him, that while liberalism may have to take refuge under protective coloration in a period of reaction, it can only be revived by leaders who win adulation, "not

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by a non-partisan superiority to politics, but by a policy which transforms the political machine into an instrument of social change." Let him heed, and then use this opportunity to reject once and for all, Crossman's cynical appraisal: "The trouble about Mr. Stevenson is that, although he would have made a better Republican President than General Eisenhower, he was selected as a Democrat."

In 1952 Mr. Stevenson was handicapped by partisan commitments to a policy which he may have approved in principle if not in execution but which was still not *his* policy. Now he need no longer defend the decisions of 1946 and 1947; the burden rests on President Eisenhower to defend the disastrous Dulles-Rhee-Chiang policy. New times call for new policies. Stevenson can supply them if he will.

CHINA IN THE U. N.?

A Key to World Peace . . . *by Edgar Snow*

A FEW weeks ago we might reasonably have assumed that serious consideration of Communist China's demand for a seat in the U. N. could be deferred until after a Korean peace settlement. Today that seems unlikely. Partly because of Mr. Dulles's curiously unsupple policy line, as read by Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., before the General Assembly Political and Security Committee in August, Peking's claims for U. N. recognition have acquired an urgency which may make them a major issue here before the end of the year.

Looking over the situation on August 30, the New York *Times* reached the conclusion that we "are now faced with one of the most difficult periods in our history." That is no great exaggeration. Although Lodge managed, by use of the automatic Latin American vote, to block Indian participation in the Far Eastern conference, his "victory" in the Assembly committee was not merely temporary; its cost was grotesque in proportion to its negative value. It presented Mr. Vishinsky with the inestimable satisfaction of voting on the majority side together with the British Commonwealth, while only two of the fourteen nations allied with us in Korean combat supported Mr. Lodge.

Moreover, Communist China's counter-proposals may be expected to take full advantage of this opportunity to divide the United States from its following by insisting on Indian—and possibly other Asian and Arab—representation. The issue could thus be forced to a second vote in the full Assembly this month, where the United States might be defeated. But an Assembly nomination of India, coming as a result of Anglo-Chinese-Russian (!) sponsorship, and after India has publicly committed itself to an enlarged conference covering major peace problems in Asia—Peking's right to sit in the U. N. being among the foremost—could present this Administration with a grave dilemma.

IT SEEMS incredible that the foreseeable risks were not considered before Lodge took an inflexible line which in itself magnified a relatively simple issue. Hence plenty of people are already convinced that top Republicans planned it that way. They think Dulles and even President Eisenhower basically agree with Republican Majority Leader Knowland and his well-known faith in "walk-out diplomacy"—in this case applied to the U. N. should Red China be squeezed in. I am not convinced of that, even though other speculation leads one to assume that the pedantic Secretary of State may very well not understand either the nature or the challenge of Russia's new "peace offensive" or the needs, hopes, and tempers of our allies.

China's place in the U. N. cannot of course be considered apart from its organic connection with Soviet diplomatic strategy; so it is useful to recall briefly the foundations of that strategy. These were laid down in Stalin's last "theses" on the international situation—formulations which, modified slightly by changing circumstances, continue to guide Malenkov's regime.

First, Stalin insisted, contradictions among the capitalist powers were deeper than those between his world and ours. Second, he saw a "disintegrating united world market," and profound capitalist crisis, with rivalries bound to erupt to fundamental disharmony. Third, the Soviet bloc is now strong enough not only to buy in "our" markets, but also to "dispose on the side of [some] surpluses" of its own, and thus accelerate the "disintegration" in the West. Fourth, Soviet policy should aim to and can, by combined economic and political-diplomatic offensives, divide and break down any anti-Communist combination of powers led by us.

Thus Russia seeks to "exploit the contradictions in the enemy camp," divert major wars—"inevitable," according to orthodox Stalinism—away from its own borders, and convert them into pack quarrels among the "imperialist jackals." Out of such conflicts may later emerge class war and further expansion of Soviet power, without Russia giving direct battle.

Except for the idiom, this theory is not new to Russia or to a Europe brought up on Machiavelli and *divida et impera* diplomacy. Nor is it unfamiliar in China, where *yung-yang ta-yang* ("use barbarians to beat barbarians") is the Eastern equivalent. Certainly such truisms about Soviet strategy cannot be news to Mr. Dulles either.

EDGAR SNOW, author of "Red Star over China" and other books, is an outstanding authority on the Far East.

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Then why did he present Vishinsky with the Indian issue to use as a crowbar to pry apart the seams of Western unity?

Even if the narrow tactical reason for excluding India were valid, the practical aim could clearly have been accomplished in other ways. To mention but one: the whole matter could have been resolved, and on a reduced level, by United States sponsorship of both India and Pakistan. This would have compelled Britain to support both candidates and have obliged Russia to do likewise unless it wished to antagonize the Moslem vote. Thus we should have saved face all around, yet have secured a vote against any unwelcome Indian proposals at the conference and effectively canceled out Indian usefulness to "the other side."

THAT SOME such tactical maneuver was not employed must be explained not only by the doctrinaire mind of Mr. Dulles but by the strait-jacket of cold-war strategy itself, which continues to incase Administration thinking. That thinking has not caught up with the fact that the Soviet change of pace has already brought about a new international climate—which Krishna Menon aptly called a "post-armistice" atmosphere. The strictly military applications of containment philosophy no longer "contain" the yearnings of our allies for dynamic progress toward peace, based on realistic recognition of the de facto equilibrium which now actually prevails in the world balance of power, as proved by the Korean truce.

Also, in the U. N. there is a widespread feeling that Russia and China have learned the lesson of Korea and a suspicion that we have not. Nobody wants to see the U. N. dragged into bailing out Rhee from a quixotic attempt to conquer Korea, or supporting Dulles's unilateral agreements with him. Nobody wants to enlist with Senator Knowland and Chiang Kai-shek in fantastic adventures on the mainland. There is no noticeable enthusiasm for any other liberationist schemes which spell war. Nothing short of renewed naked Soviet aggression is likely to change the opinion which prevails nearly everywhere except in Washington that outstanding issues between East and West should now be submitted to negotiation—a course repugnant to dedicated cold-warriors.

Psychologically difficult as it is for some of us to accept all that, it nevertheless accounts for the sharp "decline" in "our prestige and moral influence" and in "faith in our judgment and our leadership" which Stevenson noted during his recent tour of friendly capitals. Now it is not enough for them that we merely wait for the Russians and Chinese and lately the Indians to propose, with the notion that the United States will always have a United Nations majority. Votes are getting out of control. It is necessary to do a great deal of proposing on our own—in packages offering dynamic alternative solutions to problems which block economic and political progress among non-Communist nations.

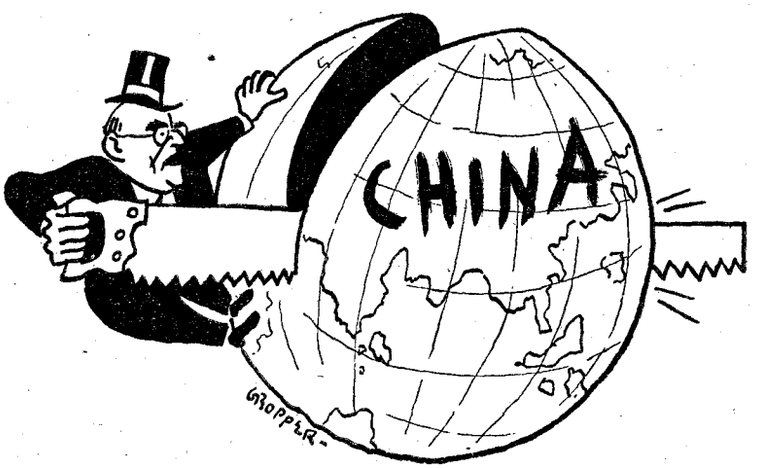
Obviously that cannot be done by walking out of the Far Eastern conference or the U. N. It can be done by patiently working with other democracies and by reconciling their legitimate needs with our own paramount national interest, security. It cannot be done by setting any arbitrary time-limits on negotiation, for after all what is a diplomat paid for but to outsit the other fellow? It can be done by strengthening the principle of negotiation as a method. It can be done by strengthening the U. N. as a center of world arbitration. It can be done by strengthening the U. N. as a center of organized economic and political planning for progress and peaceful alternatives, as well as of organized opposition to aggression. It can be done by demonstrating that the United States is no more afraid to compete with Red ideas in a world forum governed by democratic principles and law than it is to cope with Red insurrection and revolution outside of it.

IT IS against this background that the United States should now approach the question of China's seat in the U. N. Of course we must first of all ask ourselves whether a Chou En-lai over on the East River can offer us any new menace. If he can, then we have good reason for adamantly excluding him. To me the objection to China seems the same as that to the Russian empire being seated in the U. N.—that they represent about a third of the world opposed to us and our system. But there you have the very function of the U. N.: to bring antagonists together to seek a synthesis of sorts by peaceful means which otherwise will be attained by violence. The theory works only if the forces of both sides are fully represented.

Thus a Chou En-lai showing us his posterior from Peking and uttering slanderous statements or carrying out irresponsible or warlike actions against us is not necessarily *less* of a threat than the same infidel seated in full view of the U. N. and answerable to a body of world judgment.

As for the technical difficulties, they are less real than apparent. Even if Chou won entrance to the Security Council with veto power—certainly no early possibility—he would only be able to reinforce Vishinsky's *nyet*. And two vetoes do not make a majority, especially when they are two hands on the same arm. As for the Assembly, the Soviet minority there would only be strengthened by one. And not even that if meanwhile we insisted on the admission of another vote on our side.

There remains Formosa. Obviously the United States cannot agree to a decision to present the Communists with Formosa any more than it could be a party to presenting them with Hongkong



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or other sovereign territory. Neither could we now permit Mao to conquer the island by force.

But there are always alternatives. If the Chinese show a disposition to make a fair peace in Korea, some pattern applicable to Taiwan (Formosa) may emerge from that. Meanwhile one rumored U. N. proposal is to seat both Mao's China and Chiang's China—alternately in the Council and jointly in the Assembly. Another suggestion calls for recognition of Chiang's government as a purely island republic. A third is for a U. N.-supervised plebiscite to determine whether the people of Formosa desire (1) to remain under Chiang Kai-shek, (2) to be annexed by Communist China, or (3) to form an independent democratic republic, with constitution-making and electoral machinery to be set up during a period of U. N. trusteeship.

Now, while all the foregoing thoughts are being ventilated among our allies, they do not mean that the United States is expected to rush out at once and reserve a suite for Chou En-lai at the Waldorf. They do mean that we must take something besides a purely static position on this and other Asian problems demanding settlement. If we wait until the China issue becomes acute and then follow Lodge's tactics of August we may suffer even graver moral-political defeats—always assuming, of course, that "reasonableness," to everyone but ourselves, continues to purr on "the other side." Our firmness may then be regarded as justification for other powers to seek a separate meeting ground with China and Russia. It will help the latter to "exploit the contradictions" on our side, whereas Mr. Dulles's aim should be just the opposite: to exploit those in the Communist camp.

HAVING LOOKED at arguments against admission of China, are there any possible benefits? I think there are.

Nationalism is still the strongest internal unifying force, as well as the strongest motivation behind external policies, in all countries of an Asia just emerging from colonial bondage. Their need for recognition as equals and their right to a first voice in Asian affairs are common bonds among China, India, Burma, and Indonesia, and indeed among all Asian nations. Our conflict with Chinese Red nationalist sentiments is as deep as the ideological cleavage. It is mainly in terms of such sentiments also that one can see embryonic contradictions between Peking and Moscow.

It is a mistake for United States policy to run counter to any legitimate Asian nationalist aspirations whenever it is at all possible to accommodate them without sacrifice. It is particularly a mistake to place all our emphasis on positions which seem to deny China's role as a great Asian power, and its right to internal unity and self-determination. It is a mistake to justify this by ideological differences and not to stress also the advantages to be gained by China, in terms of richer possibilities of a sovereign national development, through cooperating with other nations rather than remaining dependent on Russia alone.

Nascent contradictions do exist between Korea and China, between Vietminh and China, and between China and Russia. The Korean adventure has placed North Korea heavily in debt to both China and Russia. It has put China under very heavy obligations to the Kremlin. Moscow is not given to bestowing largess on anybody. Unquestionably it is exacting severe payments in economic, political, and military concessions in China—which no Chinese can fail inwardly to resent. But China gravely needs capital credits and machinery and deeply aspires to an independent heavy industry. Where else can it get them? If Mao Tse-tung now knew another answer, if it did not require any sacrifice of China's position as a major power, if the terms were much better than Russia is now granting, he might not be above reverting—after his education in Korea—to a little practice of *yung-yang ta-yang* against the Northern Barbarians.

Such arguments, which are supported by British and other European statesmen in favor of recognition, conclude that if and when serious differences do arise between Peking and Moscow, it would be much easier to discern and exploit them if China were in the U. N. There Chou En-lai, a far more important man in China than Vishinsky is in Russia, would also have a chance to see for himself "the other camp" about which Mao Tse-tung talks so much and knows nothing at first hand. He might even report some observations of fact "contradictory" to the second-hand information Peking now relies upon from Moscow. Great advantage might accrue from being able to address China directly, instead of letting Moscow serve as go-between. Not unaware of such risks, the Kremlin may be secretly just as concerned about the role Red China can play in the U. N. as Washington is.

SUCH HOPES are not to be counted on at all, of course, and the United States must act to counterbalance China *before* it is admitted. There are various positive ways of doing that. One is to consult with our allies and get them to insist upon the admission of Japan and/or Italy as a quid pro quo. Another would be to press for early revision of the U. N. Charter—either so as to enlarge the permanent Council membership to include India, or so as to eliminate the veto power entirely. Still another is to insist that neither of the "two Chinas" sit in as permament members of the Council until the status of Formosa is settled.

Aside from that, transition from cold war to "hot competition" implies that we induce France and Britain to speed up full independence in Indo-China and Malaya, and seek admission for them to the U. N. It implies that the United States take the lead in negotiating a German settlement coupled with concrete guaranties against German rearmament, and take the lead also in fresh proposals for atomic-energy and armament agreements. As part of a new approach implementing the much neglected make-democracy-work side of Kennan's containment thesis, the United States should place far more importance on constructive projects in the U. N. We should indeed make it the main agency for planned world development and for the extension of capital loans, economic, industrial, and technical help to all cooperative nations, in which our share should be no less generous than it has been in planning European defense.

In this way, in the long run, lies the best hope of proving to Karl Marx's disciples the errors of some of his more dogmatic prophecies.

In this way lies perhaps the only hope of "dividing China from Russia," or of bringing about "the break-up or gradual mellowing of Soviet power."

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J. Alvarez del Vayo

Vienna Waltz

Zurich

AUSTRIAN diplomacy is showing itself to be subtle, realistic, and imaginative. Its task is not an easy one, for it has only a limited number of cards in its hand. It speaks for a small country, not to be compared in importance with its occupied partner, Germany, which in recent years has demanded and received better treatment from the United States than some of the official Western allies have enjoyed. In the continuing dispute between East and West, Austria's vital need—a peace treaty and the full restoration of its independence—is only a secondary issue.

This was again emphasized when Russia at the last minute turned down the West's invitation to attend another of the interminable conferences of deputy foreign ministers on the Austrian problem. The Soviet Union gave certain procedural objections as an excuse for its refusal, but the real reason was undoubtedly its unwillingness to talk about Austria except within the framework of the broader issue of Germany. Such talks, of course, could not be carried on to any purpose except at the meeting of the Big Four foreign ministers to which the world is looking forward.

Despite Austria's secondary role, one or the other of the great powers occasionally casts a glance in the direction of Austria, and then Austrian diplomats bestir themselves. A short time ago Russia decided to replace its generals in Austria with civilians and sent Mr. Ilychev to Vienna as high commissioner and ambassador. Of course the Raab government was delighted. It might be only a gesture, or it could signify that good relations with Austria seemed worth cultivating from the Soviet point of view. It turned out to be more than a gesture. Various controls were lifted; the Russians no longer required Austria to pay the costs of occupation, which had been a painful charge on its straitened treasury; and on August 11 Ambassador Ilychev informed Chancellor Raab that the Soviet authorities had decided to abolish censorship in the Russian zone. Allied diplomats in Vienna became nervous at once, fearing that these developments, like the tone of the two Soviet notes on Austria—one addressed to Vienna and the other to the three Western powers—represented an attempt by Moscow to entice Austria away from the Western camp.

The notes were genuinely conciliatory. Russia asked the Austrian government to withdraw its support for the draft treaty that the West had offered for discussion a year ago. In effect this was dealing directly with Vienna concerning a peace treaty; Moscow even began to treat the occupied country with a deference that the Russian generals had never shown to the preceding Figl ministry.

In a speech on August 16 Chancellor Raab voiced his satisfaction over the Russians' changed tone and declared he was ready to accept their conception of a neutral Austria removed from the game of world politics and maintaining armed forces merely to assure internal order. Apparently the remission of occupation costs and the new Soviet politeness outweighed in his mind the hostile reaction of Bonn and Washington to the Austrian-Russian flirtation.

BUT THE SOVIET note also warned Austria against the temptation to join the Atlantic coalition after it found itself free and independent. There was ground for this warning: some elements in the People's Party were attracted by the idea of taking advantage of the Trieste impasse and the enmity between Italy and Yugoslavia to make Austria instead of Italy the liaison between the European Defense Community and the Balkan nations. These people dreamed of a rebirth of the "Austria Mediatrix" which had served Europe so well during the Turkish era.

The choice for Vienna is between an adventurous and a realistic policy. The most intelligent Austrians, although they value the West's friendship, are unwilling to sacrifice the nation's first objective—the ending of the occupation—to any secondary considerations. Moreover, everything that is happening in Europe today, and in the United States, strengthens the position of those Austrian politicians who want to keep the road open to an accord with Russia. In Vienna as in the Scandinavian capitals—in all small countries—doubts are arising about the future of NATO. Its two main pillars, France and Italy, are seen to be shaken by serious social and political unrest. People ask whether the appointment of Admiral Radford as head of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff and of Senator Knowland as Senate floor leader will not bring renewed emphasis on the "Asia First" policy urged by the Republicans during the election campaign. This, they feel, is not the moment to turn a cold shoulder to Moscow.

SO VIENNA continues to try to obtain from Moscow economic advantages similar to those which the Russians recently granted the East Germans. The Socialist *Arbeiter Zeitung* thinks the Russians should at least return certain properties seized as reparations, as they have promised to do in East Germany. The newspaper suggests that, to facilitate the deal, there should be a development of trade between Austria and the countries of Eastern Europe.

All of this confirms the belief that Austrian diplomacy has turned to the realistic approach. If it is true that Russia will be willing to keep four-power negotiations going until next summer at least before making any drastic decisions of its own, Vienna will have time to reap any advantage that seems to be offered by the connection between the Austrian and the German problem. Vienna hopes to see both Russia and the West finally get away from diplomacy by correspondence and return to diplomacy by conference.

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WHO'LL GIVE A DAM

For Public Power? . . . *by Barrow Lyons*

Washington

THE new power policy of the Eisenhower Administration as announced last month will have at least one certain result: electric-power rates in most parts of the country will be increased. Rising costs will be the excuse, but the real reason will be that government competition as a means of holding rates within reasonable limits is on the way out. The pressure of "yardstick" low-cost operations like those of the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Bonneville Power Administration will certainly be lessened. And where rates are far too high, as in New England, it can no longer be hoped that they will be reduced by pressures generated by low-cost power from the St. Lawrence River, or elsewhere.

The results can be roughly calculated in dollars. Annual revenues of privately owned Class A and B utilities from the sale of electricity are now about six billion dollars. A modest 5 per cent increase would mean adding around $300,000,000 a year to consumers' bills. The net gain to the utilities from the new policy could be several times 5 per cent, but an average gain of only 5 per cent for the four years of the Administration would certainly be worth while, even after reasonable contributions had been made to the 1954 campaigns of amenable Representatives and Senators and the chosen Presidential candidate in 1956.

Electricity consumers will not be the only ones to suffer. It is expected that many electric cooperatives sponsored by the Rural Electrification Administration will be squeezed to the wall, that publicly owned municipal distribution systems will be hurt, that public-utility districts which have depended on low-cost government power will be in a tight spot. The ultimate results will be a slowing down of industrial expansion, delay in coordinated river-basin development, and the demoralization of our American democratic system through the increased authority of private-utility executives in the government.

Last month's power statement is curiously misleading; it reads almost like a reiteration of New Deal principles. The government, it declares, will continue to build great multi-purpose dams for comprehensive development of natural resources, preference in distribution of electric energy from these dams will continue to be given to public bodies and cooperatives, transmission lines between government generating stations will continue to be constructed. Only when interpreted in the light of statements by responsible officials and their actions over the past half-year does its real import become clear.

The evasive nature of the statement was recognized immediately by that staunch defender of free enterprise the *Wall Street Journal,* and clarification was demanded. "When it comes to tell how the Truman policy is to be changed," said an editorial, "the document becomes obscure, and parts of it are expressed in loose generalities which must evoke the admiration of devoted New Dealers. It affords only faint clues to the extent to which or the direction in which the Eisenhower power policy is to depart from that of the arch-advocate of federal electric power, Harry S. Truman." Then the financial journal found the chief clue to the statement's intent in this sentence: "It is recognized that the primary responsibility for supplying power needs of an area rests with the people locally."

Here was something new to ponder. Columnist Lowell Mellet commented pungently: "Local is the word, and you are going to hear a lot more of it in the days to come. . . . So the picture is offered of local folks getting together, pooling their financial resources, organizing a power company and setting up in business, unopposed by the powerful government in Washington."

But patently the statement cannot mean that, for that was the policy of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations. Under the Democrats more public-utility districts were organized in the West than ever before, almost a thousand R. E. A. electric cooperatives sprang up throughout the country, and municipalities were encouraged to own their generating and distribution systems. Surely the new Administration would not be guilty of such flagrant "creeping socialism."

What those who must administer the new policy have said is more illuminating. According to the Washington *Post,* Ralph A. Tudor, Under Secretary of the Interior, in an interview with the reporters to whom he handed the policy statement, emphasized that the effort will be "to take the government out of business" in accordance with Eisenhower campaign pledges. That makes more sense.

THE ROOSEVELT Administration got itself into the power business with both feet by building dams and generators in various localities where cheap water power could be developed. There was never any threat of taking over the private utilities in a large way—the proportion of water power to all power produced will continue to decline.

But government power projects did show what efficient production and sale at cost might mean. (As a matter of fact, public-power rates in the West, although consistently below the rates of private companies, have carried the burden of the cost of the connected irrigation projects.) At first the private companies were dismayed, but the example of the government inspired many financially rotten and technically backward private companies to bestir themselves. They began to improve service, and they discovered that lower rates so increased the use of electric energy that

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gross revenues actually rose, and brought greater net profits, too. Where they had found it "impossible" to serve sparsely settled farming areas, they began to stretch lines far into the countryside—sometimes just "spite lines" to prevent the organization of R. E. A. cooperatives. They suddenly began to be able to effect sharp reductions in costs by introducing technical operating efficiencies, cleaning up their financial structures, and revising accounting and rate practices. Publication by the Federal Power Commission of comparative rates in various localities enlightened the citizens, and where rates were exorbitantly high, public resentment did the rest—except in a few places. Now this kind of pressure is being removed.

PENDING in federal offices are contracts to deliver power from federal dams to many private utilities. The terms of these contracts favor the private companies as against the R. E. A. cooperatives and municipally owned systems as they never have done in the past. There will be great insistence that they be signed quickly, and they run for many years. The devices by which the proportion of power going to the public bodies and cooperatives will be progressively cut down are too intricate to be discussed here. They will effectively handicap many public systems and cooperatives and drastically limit their ability to meet future demands, which is what the utilities have been scheming to bring about for many years. The local enterprises to be fostered are clearly the private power companies. Yet nobody would gather that this was the case from reading the high-sounding policy statement unless he knew all the gimmicks.

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Fred G. Aandahl said of the new policy: "We should get cheaper power if it is handled locally. . . . I am sure we will see a major expansion program by local areas almost immediately." Was he telling the public that the private power companies plan to sell power to municipalities and cooperatives from 40 to 35 per cent more cheaply than at present? The Pacific Gas and Electric Company prevented just such a reduction in rates by opposing the Bureau of Reclamation's construction of transmission lines from Shasta dam through the Central Valley of California. Perhaps P. G. and E. just wanted the credit of putting into effect such drastic cuts itself, without having its hand forced by the government.

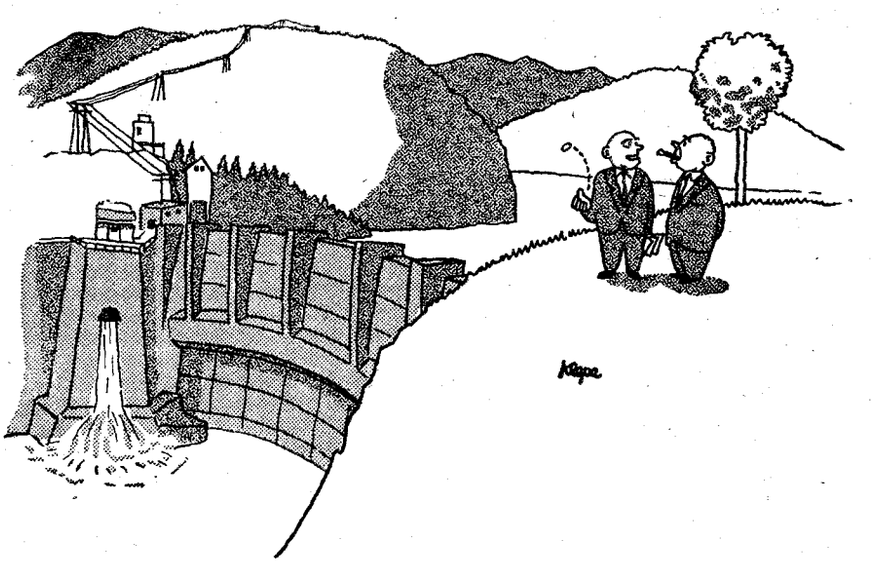
Did Secretary of the Interior McKay think the Idaho Power Company would do something similar in the Northwest when he withdrew his opposition to the company's proposal to build three low, run-of-the-river dams in the Snake River near the Hell's Canyon site? Or did he imagine—to paraphrase the famous statement of Secretary of Defense Charles Ek Wilson—that "what's good for the Idaho Power Company is good for the nation." The battle between public and private power at Hell's Canyon will be resumed September 21 before the Federal Power Commission.

Eisenhower himself told reporters: "I fully approve of this policy, and the various Cabinet officers and agency heads who are directly concerned have expressed, after careful review of the problem, their full agreement. It is my hope and considered belief that, translated into action, this policy will serve the best interests of the people of the United States." The President emphasized, it will be noted, that the policy must be "translated into action." There is a paradox here, for the new policy is primarily one of inaction: the government must not do this and must not do that. The things which the government *should* do to aid local citizen groups and control utility monopolies were left out of the statement. The only action promised is that the government will permit the private utilities to step into its place as the guardian of the public interest.

Protest against the new policy came almost immediately from the International Association of Machinists. Higher power rates are likely to mean fewer jobs in sections where low-cost power would bring new industries.

THE REPUBLICAN power policy was spelled out much more clearly than in the Administration statement by the report of the House Appropriations Committee on Interior Department appropriations for fiscal 1954. The report said: "The Interior Department should be concerned with only those functions or activities which private enterprise cannot or will not undertake. . . . With respect to construction activities, essential and completely justified projects in the construction stage shall be carried to completion to avoid waste of federal funds, but wherever possible, private enterprise shall be taken into partnership to build, own, and operate that part of each project that can be handled by private ownership." This means that the private utilities will become the preferred customers instead of cooperatives and public bodies. It might even mean that in the future the private companies will build the generating plants connected with government dams. They could show their appreciation of the favor by their campaign contributions.

The construction of power plants at government dams by private companies was actually proposed by Representative George A. Dondero, Michigan Repub-



"I'll Flip You for It"

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lican, when he introduced a bill in the Eightieth Congress to permit the George Power Company to build a power house at the Clark Hill dam on the Savannah River. This would have amounted to surrender of more than $2,000,000 a year in net power revenues. Not even the Eightieth Congress was willing to report such a bill out of committee; but times have changed.

In claiming that the new policy will stimulate local responsibility, meaning activity by private power companies, the Administration has overlooked an important fact. Most of the large, integrated utility systems are not controlled locally, and are owned locally only to a limited degree. Control is in the great financial centers, mostly of the East.

Few newspapers took seriously the declaration of support for comprehensive river-basin development. Few believed the statement meant what it said when it asserted: "The Department [of the Interior] will particularly emphasize those multi-purpose projects with hydroelectric developments which, because of size or complexity, are beyond the means of local, public, or private enterprises. . . . The responsibility of the department is to give leadership and assistance in the conservation and wise use of natural resources." Just what "leadership and assistance in the conservation of natural resources" can mean in connection with the Republican "give-away" program in many fields is hard to figure. Perhaps semantic experts of the Administration should coin new definitions for old words and phrases. The word "local" might come in time to mean just one locality—Wall Street.

BOUQUETS FOR MENCKEN

IT IS not often that The Nation, preoccupied with the unmitigated morbidity of world affairs, takes time off to prepare a birthday bouquet. But Saturday September 12, the date of this issue, happens to be the birthday of H. L. Mencken, who honored The Nation *by serving as contributing editor from 1921 to 1932. The coincidence of the dates—a birthday for Mencken, another issue for us—was discovered more or less by accident. On an excessively muggy Saturday morning this past summer I was contemplating a stack of manuscripts on my desk, and wondering for the hundredth time how Mencken, who used to read more manuscripts in a week than I read in a month, had been able to dispose of them—yes or no, never maybe—with such incredible dispatch. For a moment I was tempted to write and ask him for the formula, but remembering his long illness, I canceled the notion and made a note to send him a birthday greeting. Reflecting further on the date, I pushed aside the basket of manuscripts and began to dash off letters to a number of writers who had had the opportunity, as I had, to know and admire Mencken as an editor. Doubtless there are many more who would have been eager to pay him tribute, but a selection had to be made. Here, then, Mr. Mencken, is a birthday remembrance which goes to you with the best wishes of those of us, your former contributors, who will always think of you as the incomparable editor.*

CAREY MC WILLIAMS

WILLIAM MANCHESTER

Author of "Disturber of the Peace," a biography of H. L. Mencken

HE HAS finished cementing the opening notes of the Fifth Symphony under the tiny concrete bust of Beethoven set in his back-yard wall, and if you peer over the old pony shed—it stands where it stood in "Happy Days"—you can see him resting under a lattice, savoring his favorite summer drink of gin, ginger beer, and lime. It is September 12, a twin anniversary in Baltimore—Defenders' Day, honoring the Battle of North Point, where the British were turned back in the War of 1812, and Henry Louis Mencken's seventy-third birthday. In past years, when the chunky old man under the trellis was well and active, the memory of the Defenders was honored with torchlight parades, and he delighted in telling visiting friends the processions were in his honor.

The yard is worth examining, for it is as hallowed, to bibliophiles, as North Point is to patriots. Here Dreiser paced as Mencken edited vast chunks from "The Genius." Here councils of war were held over the suppression of Cabell's "Jurgen" and the Watch and Ward Society's banning of the *American Mercury*. Here, for a quarter-century, established writers made pilgrimages and the unestablished sent hopeful parcels. Above the lattice is the window where a younger Mencken, pondering the early manuscripts of Joyce, peered out through a cloud of cigar smoke; downstairs, in the quiet drawing-room, is the high, old-fashioned secretary where a still younger Mencken discovered his father's new copy of "Huckleberry Finn" and passed his first enthusiastic critical judgment.

How long ago it must seem to him! And how much has happened since! The battered old portable in the upstairs study, now retired, clattered out lexicography, dogma, and memoirs for nearly two decades after criticism and editing had been put aside, and an aging generation knows him only as a nostalgic pundit. Since his retirement from the *Mercury* eighteen years ago he has done no magazine editing, and his interest in literature dissolved in the great depression. In his library is an author's copy of "Tender Is the Night," with a pathetic note from Fitzgerald begging him to read it and support him against the howling critics. The pages are still uncut.

The moving hand shifted direction, and wrote on. But it could not strike out what had been once set down, and the files of the *Mercury* and the older *Smart Set* clearly testify to the elo-

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quence and persistence of Mencken's call for freedom from the old restraints at a crucial moment in the history of American literature. It was a call not always understood; in the war for literary independence sides became confused; Mencken was wrongly identified with the avant-garde, for he was merely a staunch Old Guardsman who loved liberty more than he admired Henry Cabot Lodge, who hated cant more than free verse. But hypocrisy and suppression were the enemies of all honest artists then, and in the struggle against them he performed heroic service. In the critical hour he became, as young Edmund Wilson, Jr., wrote in the *New Republic,* the conscience of America.

He became more. To the rising generation which found its ultimate spokesman in Wilson, he was the established editor vitally interested in publishing young writers of competence, whatever their credos. It was Mencken's great editorial accomplishment that despite the rigidity of his own mind he always respected ability and nearly always recognized it. The recognition of talent is itself no small gift. In 1908, when he assumed the part-time post of literary critic of the *Smart Set,* "with the rank and pay of a sergeant of artillery," it was almost unique. In retrospect, the accuracy and range of those monthly analyses, reviewing upward of fifty books a month, is extraordinary. An unknown Virginian wrote "Cords of Vanity": James Branch Cabell was plucked from that month's horde. An expatriate published his first book: Ezra Pound's poetry was acclaimed. A huge batch of first novels arrived from the detective cult: Mary Roberts Rinehart alone was marked for survival. Dreiser at last found a champion, and the banners of realism, furled since the 1890's, flapped angrily again.

The Menckenian touch was extended throughout the magazine in 1914, when he and George Jean Nathan, the dramatic critic, became co-editors. It is doubtful that any critic has influenced his followers more profoundly than Mencken did in the period that followed. He searched their talents, chose a direction for them, and bade them follow it. And they did; there is a letter from Sinclair Lewis, written while "Babbitt" was in preparation, attributing the entire design of the book to a suggestion in Mencken's review of "Main Street." It was in these years that the Mencken-Nathan partnership contributed enduringly to American letters, that Fitzgerald, Eu-

gene O'Neill, and Ruth Suckow were discovered, and that the *Smart Set* became a rallying point for young writers. The editors' knack for identifying genuine achievement among prospective contributors was uncanny—sometimes, as in Maugham's "Miss Thompson," it was found where every other magazine editor in New York and the very author himself had seen nothing—and their consideration of authors is unmatched to this day.

After the establishment of the *Mercury* and the withdrawal of Nathan, Mencken's interests turned from literary to social criticism, but that consideration remained to the end. Ruthless toward all society he might seem to readers of his thundering *Mercury* editorials, and ruthless he was, but no author who dealt with him can testify he was arbitrary. Rejected manuscripts were sent back in the return mail; if he thought a piece eligible for more profitable markets, however much he wanted it, it was returned to the author with a note explaining that richer editors were looking for just this sort of thing, and that if they wouldn't take it, he would.

Articles were copyrighted at the *Mercury's* expense and the copyright sent to the author, and if Mencken wished to make changes in the manuscript, as he often did, the writer always had the opportunity to strike them out in proof. Queries and inquiries were answered the morning they were received. In the briefest note there was always a sparkle of Menckenian wit; he could not write a formal letter if he tried. It is a tribute to the very special relationship he had with all his authors that when Princeton's Julian Boyd set about collecting these notes from Mencken's correspondents twenty years later, he had little trouble; nearly everyone had saved his.

But his greatest kindness to authors lay in his recognition that an editor's first responsibility is toward his readers and in his shrewdness in identifying writers those readers ought to meet. A sensitive awareness of the public pulse permitted him to join in happy marriage authors and admirers who otherwise might never have met, and because he recognized talent and exalted it above all else, his lesser convictions never prevented him from presiding at the ceremony.

Between the pages of his copy of Mike Gold's "Jews Without Money," which he had serialized and praised in the *Mercury,* is a curious letter from Gold. It asks, quite simply, why Mencken bothered, and runs the gamut of possible answers, ending on a note of confusion and uncertain gratitude; the author suspects he has been the butt of an obscure joke. Gold, the militant Communist, could not understand why Mencken, the card-carrying reactionary, was intent upon introducing his talent to the public. It was not easy to understand. In a time of bitter partisanship it was a complex phenomenon. But it deserved applause. And after a quarter-century of Defenders' Days and deepening partisanship it is still, perhaps, worth a torch or two.

HARVEY FERGUSSON

Author of "Grant of Kingdom" and other books

ONE day in the fall of 1919 I was sitting in the lobby of a Baltimore hotel waiting for a man named H. L. Mencken. Although we had never met he was well known to me by reputation, but I was wholly unknown to him. I was working for the Frederic J. Haskin syndicate in Washington. Haskin, who had known Mencken for years, had sent me to get a story about Mencken's discovery of the American language.

Presently there entered the lobby a short stocky man wearing a blue serge suit, a very high white collar, a blue necktie, and a dark slouch hat. He carried in his right hand a heavy black walking stick, and his teeth were

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clenched on a pale-yellow domestic cigar. His face was wide and red, his nose short and tilted, and his eyes a peculiarly bright blue. I did not recognize this figure as the great Mencken, but he spotted me promptly, introduced himself, and took me to lunch. He gave me information for my story with the speed and precision of a veteran journalist, then took his cigar out of his mouth, fixed upon me his china-

blue regard, and said: "Now what are you writing besides this newspaper stuff?"

Amazed and delighted, I confessed I was writing a novel.

"When you finish," said Mencken, "send it to me."

His hunch that I was trying to produce literature seemed to border on telepathy, and his willingness to read the result was certainly philanthropy. I sent him the novel a few months later. He wrote me shortly that it was good and that he would take it to Alfred Knopf. When I met him again he pointed out that the novel was not quite finished, and made some excellent suggestions for carrying the story farther. He also observed that the part I had sent him could be cut to make a novelette which he would be glad to run in the *Smart Set*. In due course I completed the novel somewhat as he had suggested and also cobbled out the novelette, which gave me a literary debut in a journal then widely read. So Mencken had launched another writer.

He is famous as a critic who achieved a unique leadership in American literature true at a crucial period in its history, but I think only the many writers he helped, giving of his time and energy and hospitality, know how personal and human his conception of that leadership was.

STEWART H. HOLBROOK

Author of "Far Corner" and the forthcoming "The Age of the Moguls"

THOUGH he rejected more articles of mine than he bought, he never asked me to do any rewriting. He often cut my stuff, always improving it. He invariably concocted a new title, and his titles were perfect. . . . Once when the highly volatile *Mercury* readers were tearing me to shreds, he wrote a comforting and humorous letter, informing me that the controversy had sent circulation "soaring, well above the *Christian Herald*," and promised me my fill "of sound malt liquor next time you come to Hollins Street." . . . The stickers he sometimes appended to his envelopes were amusing. One showed a tremendously bearded rabbi and a caption in Hebrew characters. One was for an anti-cigarette drive. Another concerned the sale of bonds to free old Ireland from her British fetters. Once, when he rejected a piece, he inclosed with his note a handsome if antique perfumed card proclaiming the virtues of Paine's Celery Compound. . . . His great good-humor was one of many reasons that kept us young and indigent writers working for the miserable *Mercury* checks, which, in my case at least, were for the oddest amounts—$70, $85, $90; and once, when a check for $105 floored me, and I accused him of conspicuous waste, he replied promptly that it was due to a clerical error and that I should "keep the matter confidential." . . . Henry Mencken is the most wonderful guy I ever worked with.

H. L. DAVIS

Author of the Pulitzer Prize novel "Honey in the Horn"

WHAT impressed me most about Mencken in the years when he was editing the *American Mercury* was his anxiety to bring out in every contribution what the writer had to say, and to keep and strengthen him in his own way of saying it. It is a constant temptation, in writing for any magazine, to let one's material trail in the wake of the editor's opinions and verbal characteristics instead of making it work out a track of its own. This was especially so in writing for an editor like Mencken. I did it in a few places when I was beginning to send him stories. He always caught every place, and always either revised it himself or sent it back to be changed into what I should have written instead of what he would have written if he had been doing it.

He always wanted writers to write like themselves. When it came to writing like Mencken, he could do that better than all of us put together.

GEORGE MILBURN

Short-story writer

WHEN my name is called on the gaudy roll of writers discovered by H. L. Mencken, it strikes me as a mistake, because for years I have labored—and rested somewhat—under a fixed idea that it was I who discovered H. L. Mencken. Briefly, the revelation was granted me, aged twelve, on an ash heap in the alley back of Seltzer's Pharmacy, Coweta, Oklahoma, *circa* 1918. A batch of magazines which had failed to elicit cash from the local newsstand clientèle the month before was smoldering there. When I picked up a charred and spark-spangled *Smart Set*, it fell open on an early Prejudice. Thus I discovered Mencken with all the fervor of a supralapsarian discovering God.

After several years of prayer and meditation, I began dispatching stories to Mr. Mencken's newly founded *American Mercury*. These were addressed discreetly, in keeping with the best professorial advice: "To the Editor." Each came back with vertiginous expedition and a printed rejection slip. Almost four years passed before I began entertaining doubts as to whether H. L. Mencken was getting a chance to read my contributions. So I appealed to a poet who had befriended me in New Orleans, the night editor of the *Times-Picayune*, whom I knew to be high in Mencken's esteem. Soon after that I received the following letter, written on a ragged typewriter ribbon and with elliptic alignment: "John McClure was kind enough to let me read three of your stories. These strike me as capital

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stuff and will go into print at once. Would you care to let me have a look at anything else you have on hand?"

Needless to say, the signature on that letter meant more to me than Andy Mellon's on a million-dollar check. Thus began one of the happiest associations of my life, and H. L. Mencken always managed to convey the impression that he was glad I had found him, too.

GERALD W. JOHNSON

Author of "Pattern for Liberty" and other books

H. L. MENCKEN would be a rich man today if he had worked for himself half as hard as he worked for countless young hopefuls—many of whom were in fact hopeless—whose only claim upon him was that each had exhibited what seemed to be a flash of intelligence. But to him this was the strongest of all possible claims. In a world in which the ability to think is a rarity, any man so endowed was his brother, regardless of race, color, or previous condition of servitude; and any youth whom he suspected of being so endowed was his godson, for whose intellectual advancement he felt responsible to the race. If much of his time, energy, and enthusiasm was squandered upon unprofitable projects, is that not true of some donations of every philanthropist? What the world remembers is that some of his gifts of aid and encouragement were not squandered but yielded returns that were handsome additions to the intellectual assets of the country. Even when some protégé for whom he labored proved to be an ass, still there was honor in the effort. Mencken did prodigious execution among the frauds and shams of his day; but now that he has retired, his wars and excursions seem less important than his fine demonstration that a free spirit owes to every other free spirit aid and comfort in the common war "against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."

JAMES BRANCH CABELL

Author of "Jurgen"

IMPRIMIS, in well-nigh everything which H. L. Mencken has published during the last forty-five years I have delighted. In private one might make bold to esteem him both as a literary and social critic more than often wrong —or childish even, or it might be just slightly pig-headed—in his estimate of this or of the other affair or person. But the magnificent verve and gusto with which always the man presented his chosen point of view, no matter what might be his theme, resulted almost always in a work of dramatic art that you savored with enjoyment.

Think what you might, whether before or after the performance, there at the moment was no denying this H. L. Mencken was putting on a rousing good show. So that temporarily his aesthetic or political or social rightness or wrongness did not seem, to me at least, to be of weight; and I no more wanted to pause and argue about them than I would care to interrupt a fine performance of "Hamlet" by rising to protest that I did not believe in ghosts.

There in brief has been, and I think there can be, but one Mencken. He in American letters has had no predecessor; and to my partial eyes a befitting heir is not visible among the several somewhat younger men who stand more than willing to succeed him as the monarch of a literary era.

Yes, and a monarch so thrifty that throughout his now semi-fabulous reign he elected to dispense with a court jester; and himself furnished for all his vassals a glut of fun continuously and offhand. I am proud to have served under His Majesty.

RUTH SUCKOW

Author of "Some Others and Myself" and other books

I AM glad for this chance to say a word about H. L. Mencken as editor—a truly great editor, and for me personally the most valued I have known. Independent in judgment, saltily humorous, outspoken, generous, human and approachable, genuine in all his dealings, always better than his word and his word was always good—these are a few of the characterizations that spring to mind. But I cannot adequately express my sense of gratitude. He was at the same time the most warmly encouraging, the most critically candid, and the least dictatorial of editors. He himself spoke and acted as an individual, and he treated his authors as individuals—gave them credit for knowing what they were doing, and accepted or rejected what they sent. I never knew Mencken to indulge in small editorial caprices, or to want a story made over to suit either his personal viewpoint or the supposed tastes and demands of his writers. I can recall only two practical suggestions that he made, and they were minor, but good.

The term "Menckenian," which grew up around Mencken's own writings, did not apply to the material that Mencken and Nathan selected as editors, which was of the widest variety, as an actual reading of old numbers of the *Smart Set* and the *American Mercury* will show. Validity was what Mencken was after, and what he looked for with extraordinary zest. His interest in the people whose work he published—and even in many whose writing he rejected—had a personal quality, while his ways as an editor were large, bold, and free.

MICHAEL GOLD

Author of "Jews Without Money"

MENCKEN was very creative as an editor. He typed on his own machine hundreds of letters each month to authors young and old. He made his rejections and acceptances promptly, which is all an author ever asks. He handed out checks and literary and personal counsel generously.

As one of the young authors whom Mencken published and helped with counsel I can only add my testimony to his great and unusual kindness.

It seemed a strange contradiction in his character, for he preached an individualistic Nietzscheanism. He taught his disciples they were élite, the supermen, and others were the mob, the "booboisie."

But this alleged "booboisie" was the American people, no less. If one despised them, what remained but to exploit them? Mencken's disciples developed a dangerous cynicism, and sold their minds to the great corporations. Only when the crash came did they learn they were as insecure as the ditch diggers and machinists. Menckenism proved its inadequacy during the depression.

Mencken had gusto and life. He inspired a whole generation of writers to

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explore their own American environment instead of going off to Paris to be self-pitying and rootless exiles. The good that Mencken did, however, was balanced by the anti-social elements of his philosophy. He seemed like a leader against Coolidgism but was really an altar boy in the cathedral of prosperity.

The historical function Mencken performed was to fight the provincialism and rural morals of the McKinley America. It was part of the campaign to prepare America for its imperialist role. Henry Luce and his bland imperialists are the heirs of Menckenism, I believe.

I am sorry it is true. Mencken, if he had had another philosophy and a touch of Walt Whitman in his heart, would have been a great Rabelaisian liberator in our history. Let me add again, he was kind, despite his Nietzschean-plus-beer philosophy.

THYRA SAMTER WINSLOW

Author of "Think Yourself Thin" and many short stories

AS H. L. MENCKEN has always been just one step—and not a very deep step—below God for me, it is pretty hard for me to get any opinions of him down in a limited number of words.

I was raised on the old *Smart Set*. I felt it was a New Note in Literature, just opposite to the dull stuff that was thrust into my unreceptive brain at the University of Missouri, where, after being raised on a small town newspaper from the age of fourteen, I was trying to believe that the academic nonsense taught by people who had never been on a newspaper and had never published a line constituted a School of Journalism. I escaped to Chicago, and after a brief chorus experience, managed to get on the Chicago *Tribune*.

I felt that some day I'd get a Great Idea. In the meantime, I decided to try to write a short story. Incidentally, I'm still waiting for the Great Idea. The short story, was, of course, written for the *Smart Set*. It never even occurred to me to try to write for any other publication. I suppose I'm the only writer in the world who never had a struggle. Mencken-and-Nathan—I thought of them as one word—wrote practically immediately, said wonderful things about the story—and sent me a check for $30. I've been happier only one other time in my whole life. They took all the stories I wrote, using two and sometimes three in each issue of the *Smart Set*, under all the *Smart Set* pseudonyms.

So of course I came to New York. And met the Lesser Gods face to face.

I heard, later, that they were quite formal with me—they put their coats on for my visit. I didn't know their office—with its beer posters and posters of old melodramas—was unusual, for I had never been in an editorial office before.

They took me to luncheon at the Algonquin—I got to New York at the end of the Round Table period and never was invited to sit there, except in the stories of people writing about the Algonquin. Hergesheimer was their guest, too.

"Be careful!" one of them said to me, "He's a leg pincher!" Of course they saw that I sat next to him! There I sat, scared to death! What should I do? Of course Hergesheimer was far too busy eating, with too few or too many teeth, I never could decide, to bother about leg pinching, even if he ever did have that idea in mind. I never even guessed, until years later, that it was Mencken-and-Nathan's way of showing me an interesting time.

The dear old *Smart Set* was on its last legs. Mencken-and-Nathan kept on buying my stories, the darlings. One day they sent for me and one of them said, "We've decided it is time you had a book published." And handed me a list of some of my stories. "These are the stories for the book. Knopf will publish it." And Nathan, as he has been good enough to do ever since, named the book. The title was "Picture Frames." It never occurred to me to question the idea, the contents, or the publisher. The Lesser Gods had spoken. What else? You don't criticize Lesser Gods.

I've just kept on worshiping. That there could be no modern literature without their influence seems too obvious to need comment. Of course I'd never have been a writer, if I am a writer, without them. Which may be important only to me, anyhow. If I don't pray *to* them any more, I do pray *for* them. God bless 'em!

IDWAL JONES

Author of "Eye of the Storm" and other books

BEING a white-headed child of fortune I have met on this planet sundry immortals. In infancy I was rewarded with a sixpenny-bit by Lloyd George, which I squandered on gum-drops. In Westminster Abbey I was lifted up by Li Hung Chang, to the approbative smiles of the royal family.

President Taft and Bwana Tumbo I have gazed upon with acknowledged waves. In the cool cave of his crockery shop in Schenectady, New York, I had when young shaken hands with Colonel James, founder of the Knights of Pythias. At the Steuben House in Manhattan I clinked steins with an old friend of my father, Oswald Garrison Villard, long the good angel of *The Nation*.

But let me be remembered as one who knew Henry Louis Mencken. I read him in the old *Smart Set* days, with the fond couple waltzing on the pale lavendar cover, its tales in French and the *boufferies* of Pistols for Two. We met in Baltimore, in Manhattan, in my home in San Francisco, in the days beyond compare.

A man entrapped by beauty, Heinie Mencken. How he could play Brahms! The innumerable letters I received from him when I was writing for his monthly earthquake bound in Paris green, the *American Mercury!* He shattered the complacence of the age. The Sacred Cows of America he pole-axed by the herd. But to his contributors he was immeasurably kind.

On his birthday a toast to him! *Prosit!* Also in the tongue of Dante, *Ancora in cento anni!*

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BOOKS

Pioneers of the Modern Spirit

REBELS AND ANCESTORS. THE AMERICAN NOVEL, 1890-1915. By Maxwell Geismar. Houghton Mifflin Company. $4.50.

By Perry Miller

MR. GEISMAR comes to the writing of this book by working backward from his two studies of the novelists of the twenties. He now deals with the five writers who, in his perspective, "marked the beginning of the modern spirit in the national letters"—Norris, Crane, Jack London, Ellen Glasgow, Dreiser. He ends this volume by promising that he will pursue the quest farther into "the Middle Generation."

Perhaps it is an unfortunate result of such defiance of chronology that this account gives the impression of having been written by one so infatuated with the novels of today, whose horizons and critical terminology are so entirely those now in vogue, that he seems capable of looking into the past only in order to find crude anticipations of his heroes. Norris's descriptions are "in the style of the early Scott Fitzgerald"; "The Octopus" is the "direct predecessor" of "The Grapes of Wrath" and "anticipates similar passages from the pen of Sinclair Lewis and Thomas Wolfe"; London's supermen are "another theme that became a favorite in the 1920's"; and "Martin Eden" is "very much in the manner of Richard Wright's 'Black Boy'." After a while we get the squint that comes from too much looking through the telescope in reverse, and try to remember who once said that the great thing to remember about the ancients was that they did not know they were ancient.

Thus Mr. Geismar forces upon us an impression that he knows little or cares little about the historical circumstances, that he has indeed no sense of history at all. This impression is confirmed by his wearisomely reiterated use of the adjective "middle class" to describe just about everything and of "Darwinian" to mean the entire ethos of a period which he clearly has not studied at first hand. The sources for his vague concept of the "Darwinian Cosmos" are evidently reputable studies which nevertheless are monographs and not original texts. Our confidence in the accuracy of his comprehension of even these monographs is not strengthened when we find him, for instance, saying of "Progress and Poverty," published in 1879, that it "had appeared in the late eighties."

ALL THIS is the more regrettable because Mr. Geismar is preeminently a sincere student of literature who stalwartly refuses to be a "conceptualist," who labors manfully to prevent "theoretical issues" from standing between him and a direct view of the personality of the writer or the work of art. It is, indeed, an escape from the tedium of ordinary history, in which one school mechanically emerges out of another without the help of either personality or work, to go for a change up rather than down the stream of time, and so to look with new eyes upon a group of writers remarkable because in them appear "many typical themes of the later period." Furthermore, the exasperation readers may experience as each figure is submitted to scrutiny from a vantage point he did not know and is none of his making will be somewhat allayed when they come to the last chapter, Years of Gain, and discover that Mr. Geismar's method has, after all, been deliberate. Yet even so, anyone familiar with the period will remain distrustful of so loose a slinging about of terms like "Veblenian," "pragmatic," "oedipal," and, above all, that ubiquitous "middle class."

The five studies are none the less rewarding, for in them Mr. Geismar has room to exercise his great talent for reading honestly and reporting only his own findings. He does not hesitate to retell in detail the plots of the novels, so that the reader unfamiliar with them, or whose overburdened memory has forgotten them, is kept informed. The essay on Dreiser is especially helpful: brushing aside the captious debate about Dreiser's "style" in which much recent criticism has become bogged, Mr. Geismar expounds fully the secret of his craft, thus making it excitingly evident that Dreiser did indeed have a craft. He establishes the thesis that Dreiser was the novelist of this century "who most clearly understood the fundamental change in the social and economic bases of American society."

He says perceptive things about Stephen Crane's emotional orientation toward "the diminutive affection of the nursery," and tells with true compassion the spiritual tragedy of Jack London. To put Ellen Glasgow on a level with the other four, in the highly select society, is a deed of courage, but Mr. Geismar seems to me to vindicate the choice. He thus bestows upon her the importance which is, for some reason, not generally acknowledged today.

Curiously enough, when Mr. Geismar

PERRY MILLER, professor of American literature at Harvard, is the author of "The New England Mind: From Colony to Province."

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comes to his last chapter—which I could wish he had put first—for all that he apparently began with a fixation upon 1920, he ends by professing a greater respect for the mentality of 1900. "The submerged truths of the 1900's had become, in brief, the clichés of the 1920's." These five—including London at his most meretricious—maintained the "freedom to dissent even from the convictions they cherished." They turned the vulgar, cruel, or brutal concepts of their time against the age itself. "In the logic of contradictions," says Mr. Geismar, "which is so infuriating to the historian, and so essential to history," these writers made "the other side of the Darwinian Cosmos" the dominant spirit of the epoch. The five pioneers turn out to have lived in a larger, cleaner air than "the narrow constrictive, explosive atmosphere" their descendants must breathe.

Mr. Geismar's appreciation of this triumph of art is the triumph of his book. Hence I am the more obliged to lament that he takes over in so wholesale and textbookish a way a conception of the "cultural climate" as being what "historians of our intellectual history have pointed out." His great theme is almost drowned in unexplained premises; all his impressive honesty and industry are required to rescue it.

New Books in Brief

United States History

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: A HISTORY. By Henry Bamford Parkes. Knopf. $7.50.

This book should make an admirable text for college freshmen and may have some appeal to the general reader. Its defects include a rather monotonous style and a certain timidity of judgment. Thus in describing J. P. Morgan's promotion of the United States Steel Corporation with a capitalization of $1,321,000,000, fully half of it "water," Mr. Parkes comments, "This was scarcely an example of Morgan financing at its best." Maybe this choice example of understatement can be ascribed to the author's British upbringing.

A strong point of the book is its emphasis on social, economic, and cultural developments and the linking of these to political changes. In particular, Mr. Parkes, successfully resisting the temptation to force history into a chronological mold, proves himself very adept in tracing the growth of trends of opinion. And while no Marxist, he rightly stresses the way in which American policies have been shaped by the process of clash and compromise between sectional and group interests—often groups of different kinds of property owners.

The book contains a number of well-selected and well-reproduced illustrations and many excellent maps, which are all the more useful because of the extended captions that interpret them.

Georges Sand as Romantic

LELIA: THE LIFE OF GEORGE SAND. By André Maurois. Translated by Gerard Hopkins. Harper. $5.

The biographies of Shelley and Byron won for Mr. Maurois a large following at the same time that their romantic élan raised the eyebrows of some scholars. Years later his "Proust" showed how well he had learned laborious documentation without losing imagination, picturesqueness, or warmth. The present long book is equally impressive for its readability and its thoroughness. It is very full, very lively, and seems to reveal an impressive mastery of the almost too abundant materials.

From its pages Georges Sand emerges as a perfect example of that romantic who somehow replaced the *femme galante* of the preceding century. All the distinguishing characteristics are there—liberal political sympathies, a determination to "lead one's own life," an insistence that "the heart" is the final arbiter in all things from ethics to aesthetics, and a restless pursuit of the grand passion, which is always discovered to be something less than the real thing.

Mr. Maurois believes that she was a great writer of letters and journals if not of novels, and for all his occasional irony is definitely on his heroine's side. What is likely to amaze the reader is not the number of her lovers but the energy which made it possible for her to make each "affair" the very reverse of casual. "With her," says Mr. Maurois, "adultery was nothing if not domestic," and it is not gallantry but romance and domesticity which require time and effort. The following is a good specimen of the humor and realism which her romanticism could not always submerge: "Chopin is amazed to find himself sweating so much. . . . He says that no matter how much he washes, he stinks. We laugh ourselves sick to see that ethereal being refusing to perspire like everybody else."

Coming Soon in *The Nation*

BERTRAND RUSSELL — The great English philosopher and educator writes a pointed essay on *The World I Want to Live In.*

HAROLD TAYLOR — The President of Sarah Lawrence College deals with the challenging problem *of Freedom and Authority in Education.*

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON — A noted historian and biographer calls attention to the "know-nothing" attacks on modern art and artists in *The Vandals Are Among Us.*

NELSON ALGREN — One of America's leading novelists discusses *The Decline of the Intellectuals.*

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Handbook on Iran

IRAN. By Richard N. Frye. Holt. $2.

With Iran back in the news, its future still unpredictable and still of vital importance to the peace of the world, this little handbook is as timely as it is informative. Its author, assistant professor of Middle Eastern studies at Harvard and expert on Oriental languages, writes with knowledge acquired in the field as well as the library. During the war he was an operative for O. S. S. in several Middle Eastern countries, including Iran, and he has since twice returned for extended visits.

In the first of his three chapters Mr. Frye surveys rapidly the character of the land and people, stressing the strong cultural traditions of Iran. Then he sketches the history of the country from the Achaemenid Empire—the first "world state"—to the early nineteenth century, when Russia began to intervene in its affairs. The final chapter, The West and Oil, describes the competitive struggle between Russia and Britain to gain control of Iran and the effects on Iranian economy and politics of the discovery of oil. There is also a bibliographical note and a useful statistical appendix.

Modern Ethnocentrism

NATIONALISM AND SOCIAL COMMUNICATION. By Karl W. Deutsch. Published jointly by the Technology Press of M. I. T. and Wiley and Sons. $5.

Many social scientists have long supposed that "social science" can be made truly "scientific" through precise measurement and mathematical manipulation of data. These devices have their uses, though they are no open sesame to the mysteries of man and society. Karl W. Deutsch, professor of political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, here reaffirms the faith of the quantifiers and breaks new ground in an effort to measure the market for the ideology of nationalism. Drawing heavily on the concepts and methods of the sociologists, anthropologists, and economists—albeit, curiously, not upon those of the psychiatrists—he sets forth a technique for measuring social cohesion, communication, assimilation, and national consciousness. Almost half of his 300 pages comprise appendices of case studies, mathematical formulas, and admirable notes, bibliography, and index.

This is a subtle and brilliant book, full of exciting new perspectives and fascinating maps and charts. It deserves to be thought the most important contribution to the analysis of nationalism since the works of Carleton Hayes and Hans Kohn. For laymen it is too technical to reach a wide market. But as a stimulus and guide to further research it should prove invaluable.

Israel's Children

LEARNING LAUGHTER. By Stephen Spender. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

A book about the children of Israel and particularly about Youth Aliyah, an organization which has cared for 60,000 children brought from all parts of the world to the new state. A fresh and readable book of impressions based on a journal kept during a tour of Israel in the spring of 1952.

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Films

Manny Farber

THE Paramount crew that worked on "Roman Holiday" reminded me of expert marksmen who had made "charm" their target and seldom if ever missed it. The ancient buildings and streets of Rome are used as an unobtrusive backdrop, and I doubt whether architecture and sculpture have ever been tied in so tenderly and humorously with what the characters are doing at the moment. In the leading role of a bored princess who steals away from dull court routine for a day of street adventures with an American newspaperman, Audrey Hepburn has enough poise and looks for seven princesses. She also has an affected tom-boyish delivery. But Gregory Peck, Hollywood's master of all shades of the thoughtful expression, manages by his varied throw-away movements to keep the film from stopping on Miss Hepburn's affectations. While "Roman Holiday" is too succulent for my taste, I enjoyed Wyler's switch to romantic comedy more than the heavier art style he used in directing "Carrie," "Detective Story," and "The Heiress."

Wyler sometimes seems to be operating here with one eye on "The Bicycle Thief." He is moving a well-scrubbed new movie face—Hepburn's—against the worn face of the Eternal City, and doing a lot of other photogenic things borrowed from De Sica. When his princess is pacified with a drug by the royal doctor, both the camera and Miss Hepburn start acting in an innocent-dreamy De Sica-ish way. When the heroine leaves the palazzo in the back of a laundry truck, the palace gates float up and away as though Lewis Carroll had given them life. Instead of simply crossing the street, Miss Hepburn walks into and out of a carriage and then dreamily down the street—in what *Variety* would call a boff bit of business.

If I enjoyed Wyler's new work more than De Sica's famous comedy-drama, it is simply because Wyler is a sharp-shooting technical wizard compared to the Italian neo-realist. Wyler is working strictly in the magically postured and timed idiom of Chaplin comedies when he starts Peck homeward with the doped Hepburn tagging behind. The main gag in this stretch is funny enough —Hepburn circling the winding stairway while Peck ascends it—but the wonderful things are the small bits of ballet work engineered by Peck and Hepburn. Peck's movement with his arm leading the sleepy girl back to the stairway is a masterful piece of grace-note acting.

Wyler does noble work getting his princess away from the inhibiting palace and into the reporter's bohemian quarters, but the adventures he arranges for the pair during the day are neither natural nor amusing. She gets a haircut, which is all to the good because of Paolo Carlini's oily-gigolo acting of the barber. After that she takes a wild motor-scooter ride, gets arrested, and escapes from a dozen plain-clothes detectives—and nothing works because it is all stock movie zaniness.

Unfortunately, the entertainment values of the picture make you constantly aware of someone's maneuverings. Miss Hepburn often startles you with perfect impressions of England's Princess Margaret Rose, even in her slow way of giving forth with a toothy, uncomplicated smile and that pale little hand wave to the crowd. You are always conscious of Wyler's cleverness—the way he times his jokes, puts sentiment into the laughs, or points up a silent stretch of story-telling with a funny photographic trick. Though I suspect the movie is aimed at an extremely gentle audience, it strikes me as a welcome, if eclectic, throwback to the beautifully acted, suavely directed comedies turned out in 1935 by Cary Grant and his zany tribe.

LAURENCE OLIVIER acts the role of an amorous, fast-moving bad man with a sort of smoldering, stuffy distinction, but otherwise Warner's has a loser in "The Beggar's Opera." Most of the bows for the artistic failure should be taken by the technical advisers. The technicolor is made up largely of hot emerald, scarlet, and a surprising amount of black to keep the film as indistinct as possible. The story consists of a few basic items from Nelson Eddy-type operetta—a dashing highwayman having fun holding up stagecoaches, escaping from jail, falling in love—raced through in stagy, skittery fashion. Besides Olivier's swashbuckling, there are two interesting crowd scenes and some half-intelligible lyrics that sound talented and racy.

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Music

B. H. Haggin

DOLIN'S book about Markova is one of several books which undertake to tell what has gone on behind the façade of the performances the public has seen and the official statements it has read—the others being Anatole Chujoy's "The New York City Ballet," Irving Kolodin's "The Story of the Metropolitan Opera," Louis Biancoli's "The Flagstad Manuscript," Roland Gelatt's "Music-Makers," and Cecil Smith's "Worlds of Music," all of which I expect to discuss here.

Mr. Chujoy—to begin with his book (Knopf, $5)—acknowledges his indebtedness to Lincoln Kirstein, who "submitted to unending questioning . . . and gave me frank and forthright an-

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swers to literally hundreds of questions, some of which must have been embarrassing to him . . . opened his private correspondence files to me, let me read memoranda that had the character of personal diaries. . . ." And all this certainly is evident in the book: reading it I have learned many things I didn't know about the succession of Kirstein ventures initiated by the founding of the School of American Ballet in 1934 even though I was in contact with Kirstein from the beginning. But my own knowledge has enabled me to perceive occasionally that here something is missing or there something is told differently from the way I believe it to have happened—from which inevitably I assume there must be other instances that I am unable to perceive. It may be that Mr. Chujoy found out a great deal but didn't find out everything, or—what I think more probable—that he doesn't feel free to tell some things. I would say, in other words, that the difficulty in writing about living persons that was evident in the Dolin book is evident in this one.

Thus I would guess that in his omission of some of the circumstances of Hugh Laing's joining the company, Mr. Chujoy is being considerate of Laing's feelings. And that he is equally considerate of the management's feelings when he writes that fairness to the older members of the company would compel Laing "to wait his turn for an old role or for one in a new ballet"; "wait his turn for an old role" is a considerate way of putting the fact that the older members were compelled to share their most prized roles with him. On the other hand, on page 163 he describes how personal friendships caused Kirstein to include on the second program of Ballet Society a modern dancer and a Javanese group that had no place on the program; but this is the only time he mentions this important factor in Kirstein's decisions and actions. The book, then, tells a large part of the story, but not "the full story" the jacket says it tells.

Moreover, in addition to the bare facts of this or that ballet having been produced on a certain date the story has to include an evaluation of the work and the performance. And there we encounter another of Mr. Chujoy's difficulties: that one may have almost everything—love of the art, experience of it, knowledge about it—that a critic needs

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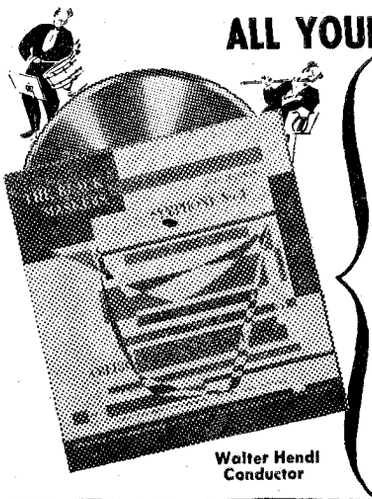

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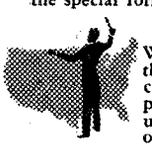

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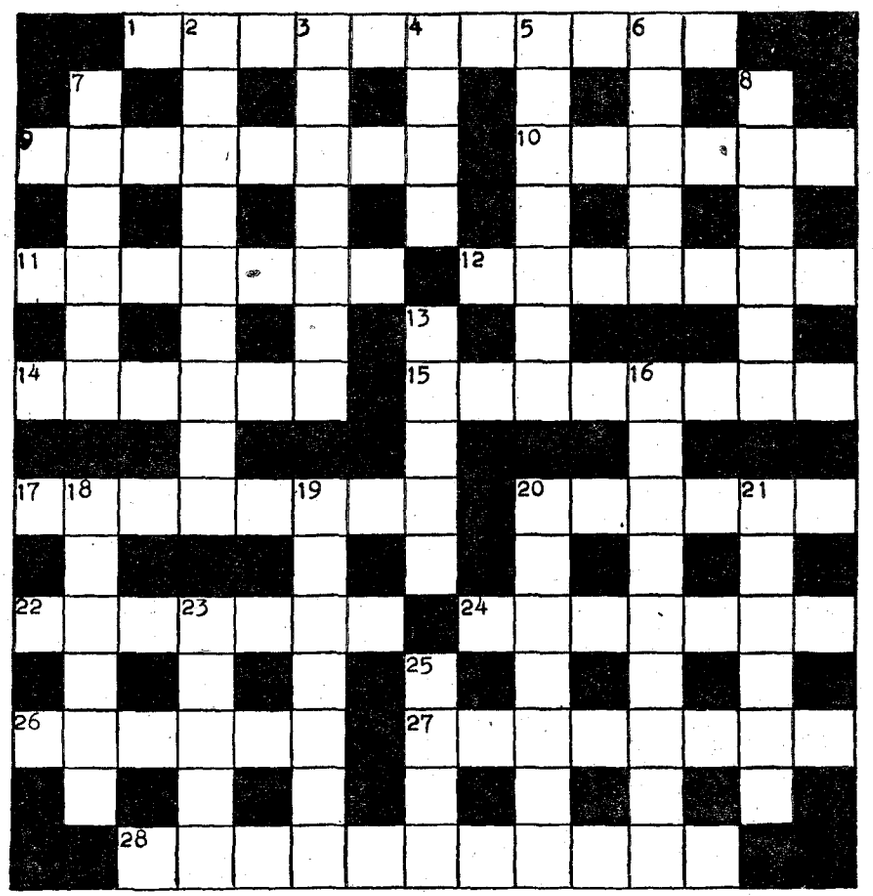

ACROSS

1 Refuse to be picked up by Oriental ways? (7, 4)
9 Find what one turns to hear the other side. (8)
10 A crossword animal surrounded by thousands more, if your spirit's in it! (6)
11 Associated with bed and board (especially bread). (7)
12 Kind of can? It showed your ancestors up! (3-4)
14 Time associated with impressions on the beach? (6)
15 Held characters, perhaps. (8)
17 Pat's deep, and so is his ear. (5, 3)
20 Hacks. (6)
22 The main boss. (7)
24 Sent in by kids to fight on the wrong spot. (3-4)
26 Hands aboard the *Hispaniola?* (6)
27 and 13 Materiel? (8, 2, 3)
28 He rents land, but not Hades. (11)

DOWN

2 Places to live, and each is different! (9)
3 At least occasionally it ought to be Blue Monday. (4, 3)
4 Not free, but sounds swell! (4)
5 This inn was novel. (7)
6 It's a bad thing to follow the end of 14. (5)
7 Otherwise a bear can only be seen at 6. (6)
8 Ordinarily one doesn't wear it to ride one. (6)
13 See 27 across
16 A little turkey, well cooled, and properly dressed? (9)
18 Was Hogarth's work so progressive as well as jaunty? (6)
19 The last word, when it comes to surreptitious procedure. (7)
20 Where one would expect a first class return to a bad actor. (7)
21 It holds things in the sporting event, if a 22 and 8 as well. (6)
23 Wood craft? (5)
25 Just beautiful? Only medium blonde. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE No. 531

ACROSS:—1 HEAD CHEESE; 10 ANDORRA; 11 UNHINGE; 12 PRESUMPTUOUSLY; 14 OUTLAWED; 15 GHETTO; 16 EMBALM; 18 STICKS UP; 22 CONTORTIONISTS; 24 PRESENT; 25 TORMENT; 26 NODE; 27 INTERLUDES.

DOWN:—1 HEADPHONES; 2 AUDIENT; 3 CIRCULAR LETTER; 4 EXAMPLE; 5 SHUT UP; 7 RINGLET; 8 STEM; 9 THOUGHT CONTROL; 13 COMPOSITES; 17 BOOKEND; 19 THISTLE; 20 SUSPEND; 21 CRETAN; 23 and 6 UP IN ARMS.

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to write about it, and lack the one thing that is essential, namely critical perception. It isn't a matter of Mr. Chujoy liking something I dislike, or vice-versa; it is a matter of what he finds to say about something we both like or dislike, which makes it clear that he has nothing to say. And this is true of most of the writers he quotes—the fact being that many write about the arts but few are critics who should be writing. On the other hand the extensive quotations from John Martin's writings have the special value of spreading his performance on the record.

What I said earlier about Kirstein was not meant as disparagement. It would be fine if we got not only ballet but everything else from people who operated with rational minds and clear purposes unaffected by personal loves and hates and other such impure elements; but the fact is that we don't get good things always for good reasons and don't reject them even when they come to us for bad reasons. And one has to recognize that amid all the factors that have operated to produce the general Kirstein uproar and muddle there has been the holding fast to Balanchine which, implemented by Kirstein's willingness to spend every penny of his own for the purpose, has resulted in the creation of some of the greatest works of art of our time.

The fact that many write about the arts but few should is further demonstrated by the contents of "Dance News Annual 1953," edited by Mr. Chujoy and Winthrop Palmer (Knopf, $4.95), of which only Edwin Denby's article on foreign classicism, James Graham-Luján's on the San Francisco Ballet, and Oliver Smith's on ballet design are worth reading. I have read reviews of particular ballets and performances by A. V. Coton that were good; but his article on the general subject of form and content in this volume I find uninteresting.

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